

CHAPTER SIX

LITERATURE CONTROL ON EMERGING THEMES

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented gathered data from focus discussions, key participant interviews, observations recorded in the researcher's reflective journal, and a study of documentary school records that were made available to me at the two schools where I conducted the study. From the presented data, themes, categories and sub-categories emerged (Table 5.1). In the first theme, I describe how the pregnant and former pregnant learners identified their educational goals, and how they sought to achieve them. For the four themes, I presented and described how the education policies, schools, the family/home and the community responded to the educational needs of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers, who chose to continue with their education through the formal school system.

In this chapter, I apply and discuss the theoretical framework, which underpinned my study as well as literature from related research studies in relation to the themes that emerged from data gathered for my study. The literature control of my data, not only helped me to understand the study participants' responses to pregnant learners through comparing them with existing knowledge, but was also a means of distilling my data themes into findings of the study.

The chapter has two major sections. In the first section, I apply Argyris and Schon's action science theory (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1990; Argyris & Crossan, 1993; Schon, 1992; Anderson, 1997) to examine how participants of this study responded to pregnant and former pregnant learners within the school, family and community. In the second section, I explore and compare my study results with existing knowledge from reviewed studies on teenage pregnancy and schooling.

6.2 Action science theory as a mirror to findings of the study

Since my study was premised on Argyris and Schon's action science theory, in this section I examine the themes and categories from the study in relation to the theory. In their social action or action science theory, Argyris and Schon posit that there is a split between policy (espoused theory-of-action) and practice (theories-in-use) (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1990; Argyris & Crossan, 1993; Schon, 1992; Al-Kazemi & Zajac, 1999; Malen, et al., 2002). In this regard, action science theory postulates that the existence of an official organisational policy (espoused theory-of-action) may not always imply that the organisation's stakeholders are guided by or comply with the policy in their actual actions (Al-Kazemi & Zajac, 1999; Argyris & Crossan, 1993; Argyris, Pitman & Smith, 1985; Anderson, 1997).

6.2.1 Split between policy and practice: Policy as political symbolism

Documentary study of the policy revealed that both South Africa and Zimbabwe seemed to meet the international expectations and standards on formulating national statutory and policy frameworks that seek to extend educational access to all children, including pregnant teenagers. The current study revealed that both countries have Constitutional Bill of Rights and Acts of parliament that give equal educational rights to citizens regardless of their differences. Further, there are policy circular guidelines on prevention and management of teenage pregnancy in schools (MoESC Policy Circular Minute P. 35, 1999; DoE, 2007). I interpreted these to be relevant policies, which action science theorists call the espoused theories-of-action (Al-Kazemi & Zajac, 1999; Malen, et al., 2002; Anderson, 1997). If implemented by education stakeholders, these policies could benefit pregnant teenagers and help them realise their educational aspirations.

However, from the narrations of both policy duty bearers and rights bearers at both schools, it appeared that there was inadequate knowledge of national policies by most of the study participants. At both study sites, parents of both pregnant and mainstream learners, and community representative members of school governing boards indicated

that they did not know about policy guidelines on the management of pregnancy in schools, nor had they discussed them with school management. At the South African school a member of the SGB claimed that:

We have not discussed this policy and what to do with the pregnant learners in the meeting (SA male SGB member 3) P 1: F.G. Interview.doc - 1:8 (9:9).

His colleague at the Zimbabwean school also made the same observation when he said that, as representatives of the community:

We have not discussed the policy with the school head (Zimbabwean male SDC member 1) P 6: F.G. Interview.doc - 6:20 (7:7).

Parents of pregnant and former pregnant learners further added that they had not discussed the issue with the school management when their daughters had fallen pregnant. This is illustrated by the SA female parent 5 who said that:

No, we were not called to school to discuss that our daughter is now pregnant... (SA female parent 5) P 3: F.G. Interview.doc - 3:30 (48:48).

Likewise, although the Zimbabwean female parent 6 said they had their pregnant daughter back in school, they also had not been formally informed about the schoolgirl pregnancy policy. She also indicated that:

We knew that having a baby does not mean a child should not go to school from others. I never heard this being announced by the school but we just see it happening... (Zimbabwean female parent 6) P10: F.G. Interview.doc - 10:46 (73:73).

All the educators at the South African school also said they had not seen the schoolgirl pregnancy policy on paper although they had heard about it. The SA female educator 2 had this to say:

I haven't seen that policy in the school before. Yes, I have heard about it that learners are allowed to continue when they are pregnant, but I haven't seen where it is documented.... (SA female educator 2) P 2: F.G. Interview.doc - 2:1 (4:4).

The same acknowledgement of not knowing much about the policy was made by a male educator at the same school, who said:

I am not sure whether there is a policy or not because I have not seen it, but it is said that the girls who are pregnant must be allowed to come to school (SA male educator 2). P 2: F.G. Interview.doc - 2:18 (33:33).

The current study revealed that the education stakeholders who knew about the policy had made informal observations, that pregnant learners were not expelled from school. There had been no official notification of the regulations on management school girl pregnancy at both study sites. Related studies by Van Wyk and Lemmer (2004), Mncube (2007) and Mncube and Harber (2008) investigated levels of school policy conceptualisation by community representative members in SGBs at South African schools. Their findings revealed that apart from school principals, the other stakeholders in SGBs had little knowledge on policy related issues. Therefore, the observation that participants of this study had neither seen nor discussed the policy guidelines on the management of pregnancy in schools is not an isolated research finding.

In Zimbabwe, a UNICEF study on gender issues in education, which was conducted by Runhare and Gordon (2004), and Gordon (2002), found that many Education Officers (EOs) and school principals lacked adequate knowledge on the policy circular that regulates how girls who might fall pregnant while at school should be handled (MoESC Policy Circular Minute P. 35, 1999). However, data from the current study contradicted this earlier finding, because the school principal and educators at the Zimbabwean study site demonstrated that they had meaningful knowledge about the policy. Most of them were able to point out the policy's major shortcoming, of requiring pregnant and former pregnant learners to transfer to another school. The educators' sound knowledge of the policy was illustrated by the Zimbabwean educator 3 who complained that:

While the pregnant learner or teen mother is allowed to continue with her education, it is bad to remove her from the original school. Those who made the policy did not consider that changing a school can have negative consequences on learning. This requirement to change school is like a punishment to the poor girl (Zimbabwean female educator 3) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:9 (24:24).

Consequently, it was not a mere coincidence that at the Zimbabwean site, where policy appeared to be more restrictive, the population of enrolled pregnant learners was smaller

than that of the South African study site, where the policy is more accommodative (Appendix 13.1). Thus, apart from knowledge of policy on mainstreaming by duty bearers, data from this study seemed to indicate that the restrictive or democratic nature of the espoused theory-of-action (policy guidelines) is also a determinant factor to pregnant learners' access to schooling. Statistical data on school dropouts in Zimbabwe indicated that pregnancy and marriage were reported as reasons for girls leaving school, even at primary school level (MoESC, 2004). This scenario seemed to also have prevailed at the Zimbabwean school where the current study was conducted because there were fewer pregnant and former pregnant learners in the stream compared to the number of known and suspected learners who fell pregnant at the school (Appendix 13.1).

Both the South African and Zimbabwean policy guidelines on the management of pregnancy in schools (DoE, 2007; MoESC Policy Circular Minute P35, 1999) stipulate the distinct responsibilities that parents and educators should play to help pregnant learners cope with their schooling. However, narratives from both parents and educators illustrated that they were not aware of these responsibilities, and those who assisted used trial and error or did it out of sympathy but not as an obligation. The educators at both study sites said that they neither gave extra academic assistance to pregnant learners during the period of absence from school nor counselled their learners about prevention and management of teenage pregnancy as required by the policy guidelines.

It also emerged that the educators lacked basic counselling skills and there were no formal counselling structures at both schools. If the educators carried out these responsibilities as stipulated in the policy, they would be fulfilling their pastoral care role as outlined in the seven key roles of educators in South Africa (DoE, 2000; Government Gazette No 20844, 2000; Education Labour Relations Council [ELRC], 2003). This is an indication that while the intervention policies were available at both study sites, they were not applied as theories-in-use or put into practice by the duty bearers. The observation from my study seems to concur with an earlier study by Jansen (2002) which found that there were many policies that had been crafted in post-apartheid South Africa. Most of them however, had remained as a form of political symbolism because there

were no clear implementation strategies and educators were not equipped with the necessary skills to effect educational change.

From the current study, it would seem that pregnant teenagers at the South African school were more aware of and exercised their right to attend school while pregnant than those at the Zimbabwean school, who preferred to suspend attendance or withdrew from school altogether during pregnancy. Indeed one South African pregnant learner appeared thankful that:

We come to school until we feel that now we can just have to go or to remain at home maybe when it's time to give birth, no one will stop us
(South African pregnant learner) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:1 (5:5).

However, her Zimbabwean counterpart implied that she regretted being at school as she indicated that:

I feel more comfortable at home than to go to school in this situation
(Zimbabwean pregnant learner) P 8: K.P. Interview.doc - 8:5 (24:24).

Consequently, the current study also revealed that there were more active pregnant learners at the South African than at the Zimbabwean study site (Appendix 13.1). This could imply that South African pregnant learners know that they have the right to attend school until time the time of delivery.

6.2.2 Culture as the governing variable towards teenage pregnancy school policy

Research on action science theory has indicated that there are always two faces to organisational behaviour, namely; “statements of moral principles or organizational codes of ethics”, which are official policy statements or the moral ideal; and moral reality or the actual behaviour and political will of the organisation’s stakeholders (Al-Kazemic & Zajac, 1999, p.353). To this end, and with specific reference to education, Argyris and Schon (1974) add that no matter how clear and rational curriculum change schemes could appear, they may not be successfully implemented unless they accommodated the teachers’ group norms, feelings, attitudes and values. These socio-cultural factors are

what Argyris and Schon call governing variables which could influence human behaviour more than formal organisational instructions or policy.

Policies should therefore, not be formulated and implemented as if this is done in a socio-cultural vacuum. In this study there seemed to be a general opposition and resistance by stakeholders to the policy guidelines that allowed for the continued enrolment and mainstreaming of pregnant teenagers at formal schools. Most of the study participants at both study sites held negative perceptions towards the policy on mainstreaming pregnant learners at formal schools. The policy was blamed for being too permissive and for contradicting societal values on sexuality and marriage. Participants at both study sites blamed the policy for also contributing to moral decay among teenagers, increased teenage pregnancy, school indiscipline and declining standards in some schools. One Zimbabwean male educator expressed his discontent that pregnant learners could lower the reputation of schools and complained that:

...why turn schools to maternity hospitals. To me the policy lowers the value of schools and education in the country (Zimbabwean male educator 1) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:23 (50:50).

The SGB chairperson at the South African school also viewed mainstreaming of pregnant learners in schools as lowering the quality education. He had this to say:

We cannot maintain good standards at a school if learners are mixing with people in maternity, what do they discuss; school work or babies? This thing is killing education ... (SA male SGB member 1) P 1: F.G. Interview.doc - 1:3 (5:5).

From the above concerns, it appeared that participants opposed the policy on mainstreaming pregnant learners at formal schools because it was against their cultural values, which define schools as institutions for children and where pregnant or former pregnant teenagers should not have a place. According to research on action science theory, such opposition to organisational policy could arise from differences between stakeholders' culture and moral reality, and the organisation's official policy (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Al-Kazemic & Zajac, 1999).

Data from the current study therefore, concur with action science theory that, the socially constructed beliefs, which Argyris and Schon call governing variables or moral reality (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1990; Al-Kazemic & Zajac, 1999), might explain the study participants' general opposition to the policy on mainstreaming pregnant learners in ordinary schools. This might have contributed to policy duty bearers, particularly educators, not having adequate political will to implement the policy on the ground, because the policy seemed to contradict the community's beliefs on pregnancy and motherhood.

6.2.3 Double loop learning: New goal setting as motivating factor to pregnant learners

Because theories-in-use are social constructions that are acquired during the process of interaction within one's social and cultural group, Argyris and Schon's action science theory posits that individuals can deconstruct behaviour that brings undesirable consequences. In the same view, Argyris and Schon further posit that individuals can learn new theories-in-use or actions, in order to change their situation and that of the organisation to which they belong (Argyris, 1976; Schon, 1982; Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985). The process of re-defining, deconstructing and changing theories-in-use involves and requires reflecting and re-examining one's actions and applying the espoused values or theories-of-action (Argyris, 1976; Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985). Referring to two learning processes for new theories-in-use, called single-loop and double-loop learning, Argyris (1976) proposes that:

...learning to become aware of one's present theory-in-use and then altering it ... requires that individuals question the theories-of-action that have formed the framework for their actions (p.370).

This study revealed that pregnant learners who chose to continue with schooling after falling pregnant might have applied what Argyris and Schon (1974) call double-loop learning, to reflect on their past mistake, redefine and set new educational goals, which informed their new theories-in-use or new behaviour. The statements made by pregnant learners showed that they had reflected on their past and then made new decisions for

their future actions. The new goals made them to remain in school despite negative perceptions from other people. Although the Zimbabwean pregnant learner 2 regretted her past, she was determined to make a change to her future because she felt that she had:

...betrayed many people, but I have to face the future and make sure that I achieve my goal of going further with my education (Zimbabwean pregnant learner 2) P 8: K.P. Interview.doc - 8:6 (20:20).

The same sentiments were echoed by the SA pregnant learner 3, who also regretted having been pregnant but had the hope that:

...even though I am pregnant I know that after birth I will still proceed with my schooling and then I will achieve my goal... (SA pregnant Learner 3) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:15 (21:21).

In the above statements, the reflective double-loop learning can be realised from the fact that the pregnant learners regretted their past theories-in-use or behaviour by expressing that they felt that they had betrayed many people when they became pregnant. Based on this reflection of the regrettable past, the pregnant learners set new goals for themselves, which Argyris and Schon (1974) call governing values. These new goals could result in them being directed to adopt new behaviour/actions or theories-in-use. The new goals were meant to help them face the future, and further their education and prove to everyone that they can become something in life. To achieve the new goals, they had to adopt new coping strategies, such as having more focus and commitment to school work, being open with their pregnancy condition, overcoming negative attitudes from the community and fighting back hate speech. Such a process by which a person changes both the governing variables and actions is called double-loop learning, which, according to action science theory can result in desirable consequences or results (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1990; Anderson, 1997; Smith, 2001).

According to Argyris and Schon's action science theory, a high degree of congruency between espoused theories-of-action (policies) and theories-in-use (action/behaviour) is likely to result in desirable consequences or results (Anderson, 1997; Argyris, Putnam and Smith, 1985; Argyris, 1990; Putnam & Smith, 1985; Fleming & Rutherford, 1986). In this study, it appears that new goal-setting by some of the pregnant learners resulted in

winning support from some educators and parents. Some educators and parents acknowledged that some of the girls had become more positive and serious with their education after falling pregnant. After observing some positive change among some pregnant learners, one SA female educator acknowledged that:

...others they do change after giving birth; they become more serious. Since they are awakened and now know their goals and eager to achieve them (SA female educator 1) P 2: F.G. Interview doc - 2:37 (77:77).

One mother of a pregnant learner, who attended at the South African school, also appreciated that:

My daughter has changed since she got the pregnancy. She used to make a lot of demands when going to school but now she knows that what she did hurts us so she is quite;. All she does is to go to school (SA female parent 4) P 3: F.G. Interview.doc - 3:24 (39:39).

In this study, new goal-setting after pregnancy and the support given to some pregnant learners by other people in return for their new theories-in-use (approved change of behaviour), illustrate that Argyris and Schon's action science theory was an appropriate theoretical framework for explaining the underlying factors that influence the behaviour of pregnant learners and the other people they interact with.

From the views expressed by most of the participants in this study, it would also appear that although there were more negative sentiments against the inclusion of pregnant learners at both schools, there was acknowledgement that pregnant teenagers had the right to education. The espoused theory-of-action which made participants acknowledge that pregnant learners had rights to education seemed to relate to human rights principles. Due to this realisation, some participants raised arguments in support of the policy on mainstreaming of pregnant learners in formal schools. They included the following reasons:

- It can help to achieve gender equality in education and in society;
- Educated girls can be financially independent to look after their babies; and
- Educated girls will not depend on social grants and will not be abused by men again.

All these positive revelations from the respondents of this study indicated that the right to education could be a common platform upon which mainstreaming of pregnant learners at formal schools could be advocated. Such a process could require that stakeholders at school level should, identify, reflect on and critique factors that are obstacles to all children's, including pregnant teenagers' right to education. It would appear from the findings of this study that there is need to re-examine traditional and cultural beliefs, norms and values on pregnancy, marriage and motherhood that could be harmful to women emancipation in education and other public spheres. According to Argyris and Schon's theories-of-action, such a process of reflecting, re-examining and re-defining the governing values of their espoused theories-of-action (Anderson, 1997; Argyris, 1990; Fleming & Rutherford, 1986) could result in people changing their theories-in-use (actions/responsiveness) towards the educational needs of pregnant learners.

6.2.4 Single motherhood as a negative master status for pregnant learners

Research by Argyris (1990) on how people can learn new or modify their theories-in-use (actions) revealed that human beings cannot change both the governing variables and actions that had negative consequences without support from the society in which they live. This implies that society's social virtues and value system should be reflected upon and re-examined so that they support the principle of every child's right to education which is internationally recognised as a basic human need (Subrahmanian, 2005; Stromquist, 2005; Taylor, Smith & Nairin, 2001; Dandet & Singh, 2001; Detrick, 1999; Tsanga et al., 2004; Ochalita & Espinasa, 2001). Such a process, according to the action science theory is what Argyris and Schon call double-loop learning and Model II theories-in-use because they seek to promote social change and actions that are shaped by rationalised information and choices that accommodate other people's perceptions, alternative world views and democratic principles (Argyris, 1990; Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985; Anderson, 1997; Argyris, 1976; Fleming & Rutherford, 1986).

It appears from this study that most of the participants of this study needed skills to critique their current governing variables, namely some cultural and traditional beliefs

and norms on pregnancy and motherhood, which could disadvantage pregnant teenagers' equal right to educational access and participation. Such support could embrace a broader perspective to include the community at large. Data from the study seems to indicate that attitudes towards pregnant teenagers are social constructs of the interrelated social institutions, such as education policy, the school, the family and the community.

Argyris and Schon point out that human behaviour (theories-in-use) is influenced by a recipe of governing variables or values, which are socially constructed during the process of interaction within social groups (Argyris, 1990; Argyris & Schon, 1974; Fleming & Rutherford, 1986). They therefore concluded that, "versions of the same model of theories-in-use result from similar upbringing within a culture" (Argyris & Schon, 1974, p.11). To apply Argyris and Schon's theory of action science to my study, I therefore studied the relationship between study participants' beliefs and perceptions on teenage pregnancy, their views on policy, as well as their attitudes towards pregnant and former pregnant learners at their school.

Data from the study seems to imply that the school, as a sub-institution of the community was influenced by the community's traditional values, norms and beliefs on teenage pregnancy and early motherhood. From what most study participants said, it appears that their community's negative perceptions to any pregnancy out of wedlock influenced the daily interaction between pregnant learners and other people within the school. Negative labels and hate language directed at pregnant and former pregnant learners were expressed both in the community, family and at school.

There were more participants at the Zimbabwean study site, who reported that single former pregnant teenagers were viewed as girls of loose sexual morals or prostitutes, and that they held low social status. As such they were not given responsibilities at social gatherings because single women have no social credibility in society. One Zimbabwean educator summed up how teenage mothers lost their social status by pointing out that:

...in the community, the girl loses her pride, nobody trusts her and people talk about her behind whenever she appears. A pregnant girl or

mother is seen in society as a social problem. Even her young sisters can have more power than her in the family (Zimbabwean female educator 1) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:57 (79:79).

The influence of the general negative perception to teenage motherhood on the school was revealed by another Zimbabwean educator who observed that former pregnant learners are not given responsibilities:

Even the school admin is not truthful with this policy because you find that if a girl was a school prefect or head-girl and then becomes pregnant, she is automatically demoted (Zimbabwean male educator 3) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:63 (108:108).

There seems to be a correlation between the more negative perceptions to teenage pregnancy and single motherhood at the Zimbabwean study site and the low enrolment of learners who chose to continue with schooling after falling pregnant (Appendix 13.1).

Most participants at both study sites concurred that once a girl became pregnant, she might lose her childhood rights in the family. Pregnant and former pregnant learners, for instance alleged that they lived like adopted children as a punishment for their mistake. The mistake of falling pregnant was viewed as a shame to the family. One former pregnant learner at the Zimbabwean school narrated that:

Being pregnant or having a baby can be trick. Even if you get a chance to go to school, you cannot ask for any favours from parents. You are like an adopted child.... (Zimbabwean former pregnant learner) P 8: K.P. Interview.doc - 8:13 (5:5).

In the same vein, a pregnant learner at the other school confessed that the attitude of her parents towards her had changed after she had become pregnant. She made the following observation:

The love of my parents will never be the same even if they have accepted this. They have changed from the past when I compare. We do not communicate well now and sometimes it makes me feel that if I ask for something I will be troubling them; from the way they react (SA pregnant learner) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:46 (59:59).

The pressure for such negative treatment in the family seemed to be influenced by the way the bigger picture of the community views teenage pregnancy. In this regard, Zimbabwean school principal observed that:

...in African communities, teenage pregnancy is highly despised, taken as a curse (Zimbabwean deputy school principal) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:47 (132:132).

Such community perceptions encroached into the school too, as illustrated by the observation that pregnant learners complained that educators did not assist them or protect them from hate speech, even if this was done in their presence. On their part, educators were constrained by community values because assisting a pregnant or former pregnant learner was viewed with suspicion in the community, especially for male educators. One male educator at the South African school said that most people in the community did not trust them. He had this to say:

As a male teacher I am not comfortable working with pregnant learners because people are suspicious.... (SA male educator) P 2: F.G. Interview.doc - 2:42 (89:89).

It looked like the allegations made by educators were not without basis, because at the Zimbabwean school some parents came in the open and made the accusation that:

.....teachers can also ask for sex from a girl with a baby because they know that such girls know all about it, they are easy targets because they are of loose morals (Zimbabwean female parent) P10: F.G. Interview.doc - 10:8 (24:24).

Just like in the community where teenage pregnancy and single motherhood were viewed by participants as a disgrace to traditional marriage values, the mainstreaming of pregnant teenagers at formal schools was also regarded as rewarding anti-social behaviour. Complaints were made by some community members in the school leadership that pregnant learners caused school indiscipline, increased rate of school girl pregnancies and generally lowered educational standards at schools where they were enrolled. The view was expressed by SA SGB male member 3, who was unhappy with the schoolgirl pregnancy policy and alleged that:

People who fall pregnant while they are young have no discipline, and they should not be allowed in school as a punishment (SA SGB male member 3) P 1: F.G. Interview.doc - 1:9 (9:9).

Similarly, his counterpart at the Zimbabwean school felt that former pregnant learners were a problem, not only at school, but even at home. He claimed that:

It is very difficult to discipline a girl with a baby even at home by her own parents, so what do we expect teachers to do? (Zimbabwean male SDC member 2) P 6: F.G. Interview.doc - 6:8 (23:23).

These findings from the current study seem to agree with Argyris and Schon's action science theory, that governing values to human behaviour are socially constructed and largely emanate from cultural beliefs, norms and expectations (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1990; Berger & Luckman, 1972; Fleming & Rutherford, 1986).

Data from my study therefore, revealed that there appears to be a strong relationship between how pregnant and former pregnant learners are perceived and treated in the community at large and all other micro-institutions of the community, such as the family, the church and the school. The relationship seems to be founded on socio-cultural beliefs of the ideal type of pregnancy, marriage and motherhood. These were the common denominators upon which, pregnant and former pregnant learners were judged and treated in the school. In this case, cultural values and beliefs seemed to overshadow the capacity of the schools to uphold and implement the official policy guidelines on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners as outlined in white paper policies (MoESC Policy Circular Minute P. 35, 1999; DoE, 2007). Such official policies are the espoused theories-of-action in action, which stakeholders in an organisation might not refer to or apply in their day to day operations or theories-in-use (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Anderson, 1997; Argyris & Crossan, 1993; Al-Kazemi & Zajac, 1999; Malen, et al., 2002).

6.3 Comparison of emerging themes with existing research studies

Data from my study seems to indicate that there could be five major factors that influenced pregnant learners' capacity to access and exercise their right to formal

schooling. These include their identification of new educational aspirations, and the responses of education policy, the school, the family and the school community neighbourhood, as well as the educational needs and aspirations of pregnant teenagers. In order to position my findings within the existing body of knowledge, I reviewed literature on research studies on effects of teenage pregnancy and educational opportunity, and policies and programmes for education of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers. The literature was used as a lens through which I examined and critiqued data from my study, in order to establish new knowledge boundaries.

6.3.1 New goal setting as a motivating factor for pregnant learners

One of the observations from the current study was that after pregnancy, some pregnant teenagers reflected on their past and re-shaped their educational goals. It emerged that some of the pregnant and former pregnant learners who chose to pursue their schooling had redefined and set new positive goals for themselves after falling pregnant. The teenagers stated that they wanted to change, prove a point in life, further their education and look after their babies. One such pregnant learner was eager to open a new page in her life, although she was at home at the time of the interview waiting for delivery. To her all hope was not lost due to pregnancy. She made a new commitment that:

I have to face the future and make sure that I achieve my goal of going further with my education. Even now as I am at home, I do ask my friends what they are doing and I study so that I do not remain behind, I know I will join them again (Zimbabwean pregnant learner 2) P 8: K.P. Interview.doc - 8:6 (20:20).

The positive change of some of the pregnant learners was also confirmed by some educators and parents. They expressed that the learners were now more self-disciplined and mature than they were before pregnancy. One of the parents testified that:

In the village everyone was like pointing a finger and at school you would find she had nobody to talk to. But she changed and liked to learn more. She did not give us any more problems (SA female parent) P 3: F.G. Interview.doc - 3:21 (37:37).

A Canadian case study conducted by Burdell (1998) found that teen mothers could successfully be trained to become good decision-makers on both their career and sexuality issues. This approach came to be named ‘curriculum of redemption’, whereby pregnant and former pregnant teenagers were assisted to regain their self-esteem. They were also empowered to take new perspectives and initiatives to life, through career focused education (Burdell, 1998). Such strategies proved that the teen mothers could redeem themselves from any past mistakes, de-stigmatise their situation and change their lives altogether. The findings by Burdell (1998) seem to concur with the observation I have made in my study which, revealed that some of the pregnant learners in the study were also able to take new decisions and set new goals, in order to ‘redeem themselves’ from their past mistakes. The fact that they chose to continue with their schooling despite negative perceptions from the public could also be an indication that new goal-setting after pregnancy could have become a motivating factor to work hard at school and to regain their self-esteem.

Research studies by Grant and Hallman (2006) and Hof and Richters (1999) in South Africa and Zimbabwe respectively revealed that pre-pregnancy school participation and performance were influential factors for teenage mothers who dropped out of school. In both studies, pregnant and former pregnant learners, whose school performance had been poor before pregnancy were found to drop out of school more than those who performed well academically. The conclusion from both studies was that pregnancy was not always the primary reason for dropping out of school. If their academic performance was poor, most teenage mothers were found to have left school before they had fallen pregnant. Grant and Hallman (2006) further concluded that, rather than pregnancy being the cause of school drop-out, it was poor school participation by teen mothers which resulted in them, falling pregnant and then dropping out of school.

While it would seem from the findings by Grant and Hallman (2006) and Hof and Richters (1999), positive goal setting could begin before a teenager fell pregnant, my study differed with this in that some pregnant learners in my study had been “awakened” to positively re-define their educational aspirations after getting pregnant. They

expressed the wish to “go to university”, “write and pass their ‘A’ level examinations”, “prove that they can do something in life”, “look after their babies” even if they did not get married. The statements seem to be reflections of and a redefinition of new goals based on their current, rather than the pre-pregnancy situation.

Studies by Duncan (2007) and Key, Barbosa and Owen (2001), conducted in America, seem to agree with my findings as they found that teenage motherhood had actually become a motivating factor for some former pregnant teenagers to pass high school and enrol at colleges or universities. Duncan (2007) found that some American teenage mothers were eager to re-enrol in high school and proceeded to college so that they could be self-reliant rather than depend on welfare grants. Such teenage mothers were found to be closer to and proud of their babies. One can conclude that pregnancy and early motherhood might have opened a maturity page in their lives.

6.3.2 Influence of traditional discourse on teenage pregnancy school policy

One of the objectives of my study was to investigate the level of awareness and views of different education stakeholders to the policy circulars that provide for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners at formal schools in South Africa and Zimbabwe. The study revealed that there were some differences in both policy conceptualization and implementation between the two schools: Although there was no formal dialogue to educate stakeholders on the policy that allowed pregnant learners to be enrolled at both schools, pregnant learners at the South African school were found to be more aware of and exercised their legal right to continue with schooling than their Zimbabwean counterparts. Consequently, the South Africa school had more pregnant learners who were currently attending school at the time the study was conducted (Appendix 13.1²⁶).

Educators at the Zimbabwean school had broader knowledge of the contents of the policy on mainstreaming of pregnant learners in ordinary schools than their South African

²⁶ Appendix 13.1: Population of pregnant learners 2008 - 2009

counterparts. Zimbabwean educators were able to highlight the main weaknesses of the MoESC Policy Circular Minute P.35 of 1999, indicating a sound understanding of the policy. The South African educators only indicated that they knew that pregnant learners were allowed to attend school from observations, but they had nothing else to say about the policy guidelines on prevention and management of schoolgirl pregnancy (DoE, 2007).

With regard to policy implementation, the study revealed that the South African school had a higher population of pregnant learners than the Zimbabwean school. It appears that the South African school system was more accommodative to girls who wanted to continue studying during pregnancy than the Zimbabwean school, which seemed to be very conservative, to the extent that pregnant teenagers preferred to withdraw from school altogether, or to transfer to another school after delivery. This finding is corroborated by latest statistical data on school dropout rates in Zimbabwe, which indicated that pregnancy and marriage are causes of schoolgirl drop-out, even at primary school level (MoESC, 2004).

Apart from these differences, an important common feature from both study sites was opposition which the policy of mainstreaming pregnant and former pregnant learners received from most study participants. As already alluded to, the practice of enrolling pregnant and former pregnant learners was blamed for being too permissive. To the participants, the increase in teenage pregnancies, school indiscipline and low quality of education at schools, were attributed to this policy. Most adult participants complained that the mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers was like rewarding girls for immoral behaviour, which is against most African cultural values on marriage and motherhood.

Earlier studies conducted elsewhere have indicated that opposition to educational programmes for the inclusion of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in formal schools is not an isolated phenomenon to this study. In the USA where legal provisions and programmes have been in place for decades, Weiner (1987), Ladner (1987), McGee

and Blank (1989), Burdell (1999), and Kelly (1998) documented how civil society, educators, and district education administrators have continued to resist those initiatives. According to Kelly (1998) and Burdell (1998), the opposition to, and negative perceptions to mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in ordinary schools were found to be based on the conservative discourse which defines the ideal family as composed of two parents, and that single mothers distorted this traditional definition of a family. Spending state financial resources on welfare grants was viewed as rewarding teenagers for wrong doing (Weiner, 1987; Ladner, 1987; Kelly, 1998; Burdell, 1998; Emihovich & Frome, 1998; McGaha-Garnett, 2007).

Burdell (1998) identified a “curriculum of concealment”, meaning that pregnant and former pregnant teenagers were only accommodated by schools in USA as a window dressing fulfilment of Title IX legal obligations (p.212). This is an indication that, even with well crafted policy guidelines on management of learner pregnancy in schools, positive changes are not guaranteed, unless policy provisions are understood, accepted and promoted by all the education stakeholders at the school level.

In an African context, Bayona and Kandji-Murangi (1996) and Chilisa (2002) also found that educators and community members criticised the policy that allowed for the re-enrolment of former pregnant teenagers in Botswana. This was because it contradicted their traditional values on marriage, pregnancy, breast feeding and motherhood. Data from my study raise doubts that all the education stakeholders actively participate in the policy formulation process.

6.3.3 The school as an agent of reproducing traditional values on single motherhood

Most studies that investigated causes of school dropout among pregnant teenagers found that interaction patterns within the school were a major causal factor for their decision to either quit or continue with schooling (Lloyd & Mensch, 2006; Mensch et al., 2001; Brindis & Philliber, 1998). Mensch et al (2001) found that high school boys made

pregnant teenagers uncomfortable in the school because of acts of abuse like bullying, mocking, domination and hate speech. Gordon (1995) and Dorsey (1989b) studied the causes of poor performance among female students in Zimbabwean high schools. Both studies revealed that male educators and boys contributed to the poor performance, especially in mathematics and sciences due to poor attention given to girls by educators as well as physical, verbal and sexual harassment of girls by male educators and boys.

The observation from these earlier studies indicating that school boys were more involved in abusing and harassing female learners was also confirmed by the current study. From what the pregnant and former pregnant learners themselves said, it appears that they encountered different types of abuses in the school, which ranged from loss of friendship, isolation, mockery, negative labelling, being used as examples of bad behaviour to being given nicknames. I presented and discussed these forms of abuse to pregnant and former pregnant learners under the sub-theme of hate language. Mainstream male learners were largely blamed for such hate speech as illustrated by one female learner at the Zimbabwean school who was unhappy that:

You hear boys asking how it feels to have sex or how she had sex with her husband or boyfriend last night (Zimbabwean mainstream female learner 5) P 9: F.G. Interview.doc - 9:15 (52:52).

At the South African school, a mainstream female learner made the same allegation against boys at the school and also expressed the concern that:

Some of us who are also girls feel disturbed by what boys say always to them. You hear someone always using an example of pregnancy where it does not fit. Even teachers they hear it that this is not fair but they do not act (SA mainstream female learner 1) P 5: F.G. Interview.doc - 5:20 (55:55).

While studies by Gordon (1995), Dorsey (1989b) and Mensch et al (2001) seemed to point to male stakeholders within the school as the more perpetrators of abuse and harassment against female learners, the current study revealed an extra dimension to their findings. There was a different revelation, which seemed to indicate that female educators at both schools used more abusive language to pregnant learners than male educators.

One Zimbabwean pregnant learner accused female educators at the school for being more abusive than male educators. She complained that:

I would not like to go to school in this situation because I know I will be made ashamed by teachers and other children; especially female teachers, they will teach about you all the time (Zimbabwean pregnant learner 1) P 8: K.P. Interview.doc - 8:4 (28:28).

The same allegation was made against female educators by pregnant and former pregnant learners. The sentiments were represented by one former pregnant learner at the South African school, who made the accusation that:

...it is the lady teachers who give us more problems. They can shout at you for a small thing and start to talk about being pregnant and babies to silence you among other students (SA former pregnant learner 3) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:51 (67:67).

From the study, it emerged that verbal abuse of pregnant teenagers was a phenomenon which the community seemed to implicitly condone as a social control mechanism meant to uphold the cultural belief that pregnancy outside marriage is shameful to society. I found this to be contrary to the policy guidelines, which call on schools to take measures against hate speech and any stigmatisation of pregnant learners (DoE, 2007; MoESC Policy Circular Minute P35, 1999).

Another indication that pregnant learners were not adequately accommodated at the two schools was that almost all the participant categories of this study called for separate schools for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers. Reasons forwarded for the call to separate pregnant learners from mainstream learners included that; once pregnant, a woman becomes an adult who should be in a non-formal institution; they were difficult to discipline by educators; they were a risk to male educators; there were no relevant facilities for pregnant people; and educators were not trained to handle pregnant learners. Indeed, educators at both study sites indicated that they were not capable of helping pregnant teenagers and had no training on basic counselling.

It emerged from gathered data that because pregnant and former pregnant learners were perceived as girls of loose sexual morals, educators and parents at both study sites

expressed fear that some male educators could be ‘trapped’ into or suspected of having sexual relationships with the pregnant or former pregnant learners. Although she perceived former pregnant learners as sexually loose, one female parent at the Zimbabwean study site was suspicious that:

.....teachers can also ask for sex from a girl with a baby because they know that such girls know all about it, they are easy targets because they are of loose morals (Zimbabwean female parent 3) P10: F.G. Interview.doc - 10:8 (24:24).

The same suspicion, which showed community mistrust of male educators, was also expressed by the SA male parent 1 who also alleged that:

Some of the teachers are playing games. They can impregnate a learner and go to the parents secretly to pay a bill and promise to marry the girl (SA female parent 1) P 3: F.G. Interview.doc - 3:34 (7:7).

With regard to separate or special programmes for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers, in the USA and Canada where such programmes were established alongside ordinary schools, there were facilities and provisions like counselling services, health and baby care laboratories, life skills and family life education (Weiner, 1987; Duncan, 2007; Key, Barbosa & Owen, 2001; Kelly, 1996; Burdell, 1996; Mitchell, 1999; Searmark & Lungs, 2004). Such provisions were found to be non-existent at the two schools where I conducted the study. There is need for psycho-social services, especially counselling, to assist educators and both pregnant learners to cope with education.

6.3.4 The school as an agent of reproducing patriarchal values

Gender bias was one factor which the current study found to influence participants’ perceptions to the policy and practice of mainstreaming pregnant learners in formal education. To show unfair treatment of male and female students in education, female participants complained that:

If it were men who are affected and are to be expelled from school, you will find that most men would support it. But just because it’s us women; then men just oppose it.... (SA SGB female member 1) P 1: F.G. Interview.doc - 1:15 (16:16).

This argument, which was made in reference to the observation that in most of the cases the pregnant learner is expelled, suspended or given leave from school while nothing is said about the male partner responsible for the pregnancy (Bayona & Kadji-Murangi, 1996; Mitchell et al., 1999; Chilisa, 2002; Gordon, 2002; Hubbard et al., 2008).

The observation follows the feminist theoretical argument that schooling mirrors and perpetuates social inequalities in society (Leach, 2000; Chilisa, 2002; Ritzer, 1992; MacDonald, 1981). Furthermore, gender ideology which is informed by the patriarchal nature of society is the basis upon which the reproductive role of women is undervalued in most societies. According to this view, the nature of educational policy design on pregnant learners could reflect and correspond with the society's response to human rights and gender equity issues. This is because a society's general perceptions to and treatment of pregnant teenagers, and women in general are also reflected and reproduced through schools (Chilisa, 2002). Education perpetuates gender inequality by defining reproductive and childcare responsibilities as feminine roles by social norms, practices and customs (MacDonald, 1981; Leach, 2000; Stromquist, 1997b), even if there could be formal policies aimed at promoting gender equality. Madeleine MacDonald argues that schooling is one of the major agents of reproducing unequal gender relations by delegating to women, child care and early education as their prime responsibility (MacDonald, 1981). The patriarchal nature of society and gender ideologies could therefore be reflected and serve to influence the nature of schools' service delivery to pregnant learners.

6.3.5 Family support in building home-school partnership for pregnant learners

Sociological theory posits that the school is a microcosm of the larger society and therefore mirrors or reflects the socio-cultural patterns of how the whole society is structured and functions (Blackledge & Hunt, 1992; Ritzer, 1992; Haralambos & Holborn, 1996). Likewise in this study, it appears that the school and the home both depicted and reproduced the attitudes, expectations and treatment of pregnant learners that conformed with the cultural values and beliefs of the community on teenage pregnancy.

Results from this study suggest that once a learner becomes pregnant, she loses her social and childhood rights in the family, at school and in the community in general. Examples that illustrate loss of social status and childhood rights include being negatively and suspiciously perceived as sexually loose and undisciplined; not being given responsibilities in the family; and not being free to communicate with parents or ask for childhood needs like pocket money and school fees. I found these observations to be similar to Kelly (1998) and Burdell (1998) who also found that giving educational rights and social welfare grants to pregnant and former pregnant teenagers is seen in the USA as sending the wrong message, of rewarding immoral sexual behaviour.

The loss of social and childhood rights by pregnant and former pregnant learners, which is reported in this study, is also not a phenomenon unique to this study. Studies by Weigand (2005) and Brindis and Philliber (1998) found that, unlike other marginalised groups, such as the disabled and minority ethnic groups, teenage mothers are a marginalised group that has not yet gained self-advocacy on their concerns due to conservative views towards sexuality and marriage.

Although the DoE (2007) policy guidelines emphasise that parents of former pregnant learners have the responsibility of baby care, most parents who were interviewed revealed that caring for their daughter's baby was more of a favour than an obligation. Because of baby-care and other household responsibilities, some of the former pregnant learners said they had to either complete their school work at school or only studied at home when the baby had gone to sleep. These observations are consistent with those of Chetty and Chigona (2008, 2009) who found that former pregnant teenagers had no adequate time to study at home because of being overloaded with household work and inadequate support from their family members. Another South African study by Grant and Hallman (2006) found that parental support in the form of material provision and baby minding was one determinant factor for school re-enrolment by teenage mothers. The study revealed that teenage mothers who failed to get such support from parents or other family members were more likely to drop out from school. On the same note McGraha-Garnett (2007)

concluded that “Adolescent mothers who dropped out evidenced greater distance in their involvement with their parents” (p.104).

However in this study, not all pregnant learners painted a gloomy picture of the home environment. There are a few who acknowledged that their parents had not changed their attitudes and support. For example, the SA pregnant learner 2 showed her appreciation by stating that:

The love of my parents has not changed. They still treat me as their child just like my sisters and brother. They show me by the way they still give me chance to still come to school just like other children. We discussed the matter, at first they were angry with me but they understand that it was just a mistake and it will be over and life will come back to normal (SA pregnant learner 2) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:47 (60:60).

It would appear that parents who discussed with their daughters when they became pregnant were more considerate. They established contacts with the school and took care of the baby while their daughter did her school work. Some mothers reported that they accompanied their pregnant daughters to the clinic and school, in order to protect them from public abuse. Such support was illustrated by the Zimbabwean female parent 6 who said:

I had to take my daughter to school daily as she was writing her examinations and they would not say anything because I was present (Zimbabwean female parent 6) P10: F.G. Interview.doc - 10:42 (67:67).

Similarly, in order to protect her pregnant daughter’s right to education, the SA female parent 5 felt obliged to support her daughter because she knew that:

...she has the right to go to school even if she is very pregnant as long she can do what is wanted at school. I sometimes go with her and go to fetch her if she phones me while at school (SA female parent 5) P 3: F.G. Interview.doc - 3:29 (46:47).

Home-school partnerships were also reported to have been initiated by school management at the Zimbabwean study site. The school principal is said to have visited a family to encourage the parents to support their pregnant daughter so that she could write

final examinations. Therefore, results from this study largely concurred with research findings from elsewhere, which concluded that the family setting had a strong influence on pregnant teenagers' future educational plans and needs, resilience to continue with schooling and performance (Weigand, 2005; Chigona & Chetty, 2008, 2009; Ahn, 1994; McGraha-Garnett, 2007; Grant & Hallman, 2006). The home-school partnerships, although they seemed to occur on a very insignificant scale in this study, could be the best opportunity to build on if the mainstreaming of pregnant teenagers in formal education is to be effectively undertaken as an intervention measure for school dropout due to pregnancy. The partnership could be done through fostering and promoting the principle of an equally shared responsibility between the school and not only the families of pregnant learners, but also the other micro-institutions of the community like the church, clinics, political and local government structures.

Observations from this study indicated that the social fabrics of the two schools seemed to be shaped around the other social institutions in the community. I therefore concluded that the opportunities and challenges for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners within the formal school system may not fully be attributed to a particular school's structural and functional characteristics, but could also be a result of the whole community's socio-cultural response to teenage pregnancy and early motherhood.

6.4 Chapter summary

The major objective of this study was to investigate how the school and other social institutions responded to the educational needs and aspirations of pregnant teenagers who chose to continue with their education at formal schools. From the themes that emerged from the study, it appears that the nature of responses to pregnant learners are shaped more by the community's cultural beliefs, norms, values and expectations on marriage, pregnancy and motherhood than the official school policy. The study revealed that apart from not explicitly denying pregnant teenagers' access to schooling as required by policy, little attention at both schools was given for the enhancement of equitable educational participation and outcomes by pregnant learners. What most participants expressed on the

policy, the schools, and the home seemed to indicate that the institutions, at both study sites, responded to teenage pregnancy in similar ways.

In this chapter, I first applied the action science theory to examine the views of the study participants on the mainstreaming of pregnant teenagers at formal schools. Argyris and Schon (1974) posit that human action or theories-in-use is influenced by governing values, which are socially constructed within a socio-cultural setting. Findings of this study revealed that while the two schools where the study was conducted had official policy directives (espoused theory-of-action) on how to mainstream learners who might fall pregnant while at school (Ode, 2007; MoESC Policy Circular Minute, P.35, 1999), not much had been done in terms of policy dialogue, conceptualisation and appreciation, to promote the mainstreaming of pregnant learners at the schools.

It would appear from this study that education stakeholders were more influenced by the community's cultural and traditional beliefs, norms and expectations on pregnancy, marriage and motherhood to treat pregnant learners within the home and the school as they do. As a result, the negative traditional perceptions of teenage pregnancy and single motherhood in the community seemed to also have influenced pregnant learners' educational access, participation and performance in a negative manner. The study therefore, concurred with the action science theory, which points to that, there is a split between an organisation's official policy or espoused theory-of-action and its stakeholders' actual behaviour or theories-in-use (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1999; Anderson, 1997; Al-Kazemi & Zajac, 1999; Malen, et al., 2002).

Furthermore, the study also concurred with the action science theory on its proposition that the values or governing variables which influenced behaviour (theories-in-use) were socially acquired during interaction in a given socio-cultural context. In this study, cultural beliefs, which educators and learners acquired in their community, seemed to influence study participants' perceptions and treatment of pregnant learners more than official school policy.

With regard to existing knowledge and related research studies, some findings of the present study seemed to concur with what has been found elsewhere although with some differences with regards to context, and the study sample. Although there is no existing research that directly studied education stakeholders' level of conceptualisation of policy on management of school girl pregnancy in South Africa, this study concurred with earlier researches by Mncube (2007), Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004), Mncube and Harber (2008) and Van Wyk and Lemmer (2004), which found that, apart from school principals, other representatives in SGBs had inadequate knowledge on school policy and made no meaningful contributions on decision making in the school.

However, in the case of Zimbabwe, the current study contradicted earlier research by Runhare and Gordon (2004) and Gordon (2002), which concluded that Zimbabwean school principals and educators knew little about the MoESC, Policy Circular Minute P.35 of 1999. The policy circular outlines procedures for mainstreaming pregnant learners in schools. A comparison of what obtained from reviewed literature and findings from the current study revealed that the both schools for the current study lagged behind schools in the USA, the UK, Canada and Sweden, in providing education programmes that catered for pregnant learners (Duncan, 2007; Key, Barbosa & Owen, 2001; Kelly, 1996; Burdell, 1996; Mitchell, 1999; Searmark & Lungs, 2004).

However, conservatism to pregnant teenagers' educational and other social rights which were revealed by the current study seem to be similar to what researchers have established in the developed countries. Research studies seem to also indicate that there are still objections by the public to the mainstreaming of pregnant teenagers in formal schools due to conservative and traditional discourses on marriage and motherhood (Weiner, 1987; Ladner, 1987; Kelly, 1998; Burdell, 1998; Emihovich & Frome, 1998; McGaha-Garnett, 2007).

In the next chapter, I distil and filter the main findings of my study, outline new knowledge that was generated from this study and make recommendations for further research on issues that emerged, but might have been left hanging.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

The major purpose of my study was to explore and compare how stakeholders at two formal schools responded to the educational needs of pregnant teenagers within their socio-cultural settings. The study investigated how the lived experiences of pregnant learners within the family, the school and the community might have affected their educational aspirations, participation and outcomes. In order to explore and understand how the two schools responded to the mainstreaming of pregnant learners, the views of educators, parents, members of the school governing bodies and students who studied with pregnant and former pregnant teenagers were gathered through focus group discussions and key participant interviews. Data gathered at the two study sites were compared and reference was made to relevant literature on the topic.

The review of literature, which is discussed in chapter two, indicated that the enactment of legal provisions and policies that prohibit the expulsion and discrimination of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in formal educational institutions is a fairly new phenomenon, especially in developing countries like South Africa and Zimbabwe where this study was conducted (Grant & Hallman, 2006; Meekers & Ahmed, 1999; Hubbard et al., 2008; Gordon, 2002; Chilisa, 2002; Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996; Chigona & Chetty, 2008). Further, available research studies revealed that programmes that cater for the mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers are operational in a few countries like the USA, the UK and Canada, where they have been established since the early 1980s (Weiner, 1987; Zellman, 1981; Burdell, 1996; Brundis & Philliber, 1998; Key, Barbosa & Owens, 2001). In these programmes, schools are equipped to cater for the psycho-social, life skills, career development and academic needs of the mainstreamed pregnant and former pregnant teenagers. However, in most African countries mainstreaming of pregnant teenagers in formal schools seems to be legalised but not substantially implemented (Chilisa, 2002; Hubbard et al., 2008; Grant & Hallman,

2006; Gordon, 2002; Meekers & Ahmed, 1999). Consequently, in South Africa and Zimbabwe, where pregnant and former pregnant teenagers have had the legal right to continue with schooling since 1996 and 1999 respectively, few studies have been conducted to examine how this is benefiting the affected children and how formal schools have responded to this responsibility.

While the legal responsibilities of schools to integrate learners who could fall pregnant are clearly outlined through relevant policies in both South Africa and Zimbabwe (DoE, 2007; MoESC Policy Circular Minute P.35, 1999), my study was premised on the notion that policy formulation and policy implementation are two distinct processes (Jansen, 2002; Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1990). It was on the basis of this assumption that I chose to underpin the study on Argyris and Schon's action science theory which posits that human behaviour is constituted by espoused theories-of-action (policy) and theories-in-use (actions). I applied the theory to analyse how the study participants were influenced by their social and cultural beliefs to perceive the policy and practice of mainstreaming pregnant learners at formal schools.

The study revealed that while participants seemed to appreciate that pregnant learners had a legal right to education, most of them were opposed to the inclusion of pregnant learners in formal schools because of traditional and cultural beliefs on teenage pregnancy and single motherhood. Findings from the study therefore tended to agree with action science theory's proposition that there is usually a split between policy and practice or what people espouse about their actions and how they actually behave (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1990; Al-Kazemi & Zajac, 1999; Malen et al., 2002; Argyris & Crossan, 1993; Schon, 1982). It emerged from the study that policy implementers did not always meet their responsibilities according to policy directives because of cultural inclinations.

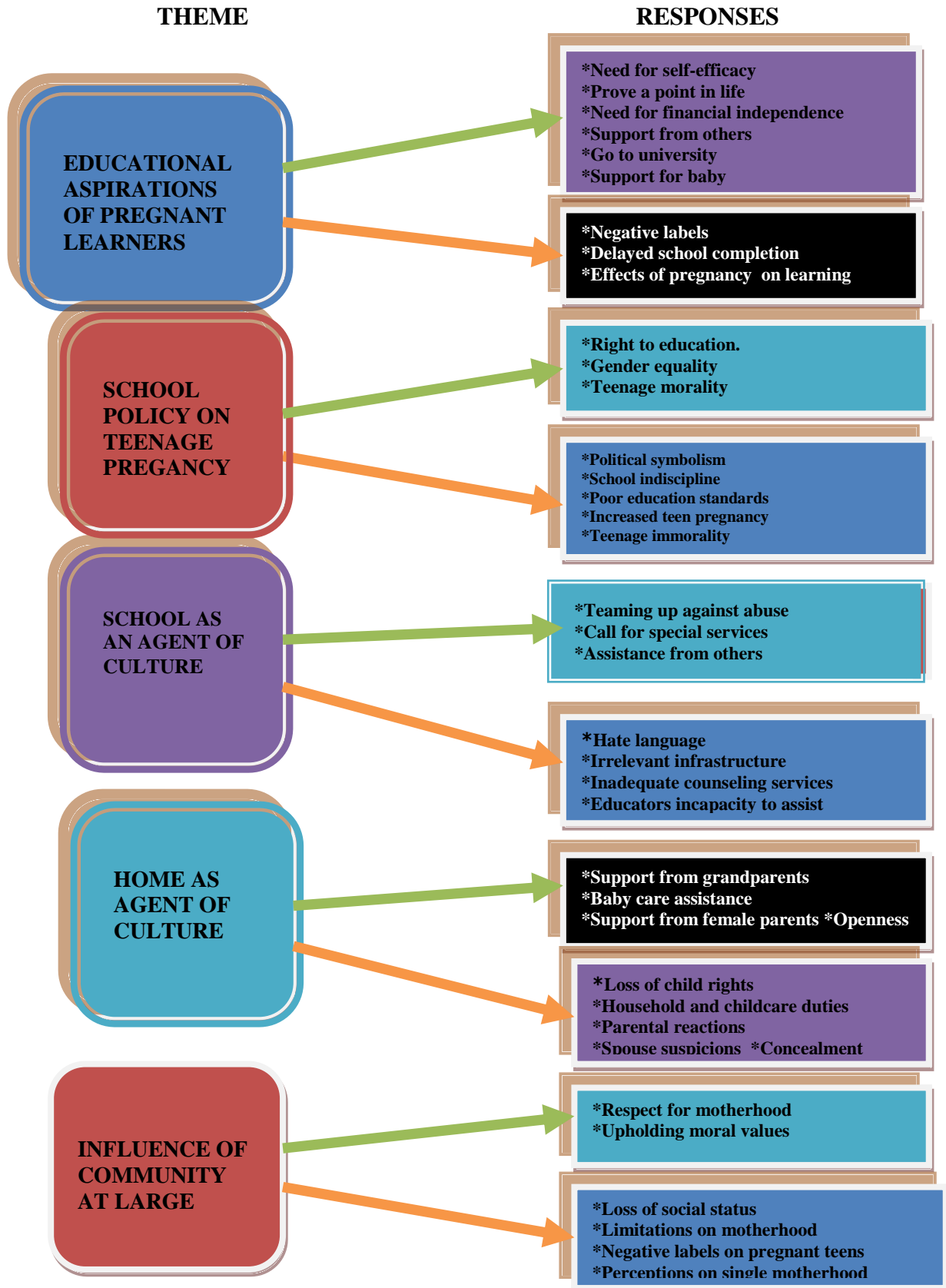
In the previous chapter, I highlighted and discussed the data that emerged from this study in relation to related literature and findings from other research studies. From reviewed literature, it would appear that the opposition to liberal policies that allow for inclusion of

pregnant learners into formal schools, which was revealed in the study, is not an isolated phenomenon. Even in the USA, where programmes for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers have been in place for a while, several studies have shown that welfare grants and educating pregnant and former pregnant teenagers are still viewed as a waste of resources and a way of rewarding deviant child behaviour (Carlson, 1992; Kelly, 1998; Burdell, 1998). Such opposition, as the current study revealed, was found to be associated with traditional and conservative values and attitudes that were against teenage pregnancy and single motherhood.

7.2 Summary of emerging themes and findings

Figure 7.1 is a summary of the positive and negative institutional responses to the mainstreaming of pregnant teenagers that emerged from gathered data at the two formal schools where I conducted the study. The positive factors represent opportunities for achieving equitable educational provision for pregnant learners, while the negative represent current challenges to the mainstreaming of pregnant teenagers in formal schools.

Figure 7.1: Institutional responsiveness to the mainstreaming of pregnant learners



As illustrated in figure 7.1, five themes, which explained how the study participants responded to the mainstreaming of pregnant learners at formal schools, emerged from this study. The (top) green arrows in the figure point to the responses that I classified as the positive responses to mainstreaming of pregnant learners in formal schools, while the (bottom) orange arrows indicate the negative responses.

The first theme revealed that pregnant teenagers who chose to continue with their schooling despite the negative attitudes towards teenage pregnancy, had set for themselves new goals after falling pregnant. Such goals, which included the need to be self-reliant, to prove a point in life and to proceed to tertiary education, seemed to act as motivating factors to continue with schooling. I equated this process of new goal setting after pregnancy to what Argyris and Schon (1974) call double-loop learning, whereby a person could engage in self reflection and adopt new life values and actions that could bring about desirable consequences or results. However, there appeared to be negative factors to the achievement of the new goals. The condition of pregnancy itself was one deterrent factor because it had side effects like stress, depression, emotional instability, and illness. This was found to result in irregular school attendance and delayed school completion or even voluntary withdrawal from school altogether.

Socio-cultural beliefs which participants held against the education policies that allow pregnant learners to continue with formal schooling were found to influence the negative responsiveness of the two schools to the mainstreaming of pregnant learners. The study revealed that, with the exception of some educators at the Zimbabwean study site, all the other participants had no meaningful knowledge of official policy guidelines on prevention and management of pregnancy in schools. While some of the adult participants or policy duty bearers appreciated that policies that allow pregnant learners to continue with their education promoted every child's right to education and gender equality, there was general opposition to the continued enrolment of pregnant teenagers at both schools. There seemed to be a feeling that the policies were too permissive and could cause school indiscipline, an increase in teenage pregnancy and decline in the standard of schools.

A call was therefore, made at both study sites for special and separate schools for pregnant and former pregnant learners. At the Zimbabwean study site, most educators and parents called for pregnant learners to study at non-formal or correspondence, schools which they said are suitable for children who chose to be adults. The study found that motherhood was culturally equated to adulthood regardless of one's age and this seemed to militate against the pregnant learners' access to formal schooling.

In terms of enrolment, the study found that the South African school had more pregnant and former pregnant learners than the Zimbabwean school. This seemed to indicate that there were more educational opportunities for pregnant teenagers in South Africa than in Zimbabwe. I explained the difference in terms of the differential attitudes and reactions to teenage pregnancy, which were revealed at the two study sites.

Data from interviews seemed to indicate that it was more common for parents at the Zimbabwean study site to either chase a pregnant daughter away to the man suspected to be responsible for the pregnancy or to live elsewhere. This resulted in the suspension of school attendance or complete withdrawal from school.

It also emerged that pregnant learners at the Zimbabwean school were less aware and less prepared to exercise their right to continue with schooling compared with their South African counterparts. The South African community appeared to be more accommodative of pregnant learners, while at the Zimbabwean school, marriage and not schooling was viewed as the better option for any pregnant girl regardless of her age. This was meant to restore the pregnant girl's social dignity as a woman. Overall, there seemed to be openness in approach to learner pregnancy at the South African school, as opposed to concealment of learner pregnancy at the Zimbabwean school which among other factors, was found to contribute to the difference in the population of enrolled pregnant learners at the two schools.

Both schools where the study was conducted were, in terms of infrastructure and human resource capacity, found to be inadequately prepared to cater for mainstreaming of

pregnant learners. Educators at both schools were found to be inadequately prepared to render relevant assistance and counselling services to pregnant learners.

Boys and female educators were alleged to verbally abuse pregnant learners more than other participants. Male educators felt more incapacitated to assist pregnant and former pregnant learners because there were suspicions in both communities that they could end up having sexual relationships with them. This was because pregnant and former pregnant teenagers are viewed as easy targets for sexual abuse.

This study found that, in the family, the nature of parental reactions to a daughters' pregnancy had implications on the nature of treatment and support they gave to pregnant learners' educational needs. In Zimbabwe, most parents were reported to send their daughters away to either the man suspected to be responsible for the pregnancy or to a close relative who lived elsewhere. This seemed to be one reason why there were fewer pregnant learners at the Zimbabwean school than at the South African school. I concluded that the integration of pregnant learners had not reached any meaningful level at the Zimbabwean school because of conservatism to teenage pregnancy in the broader community.

Dialogue was found to be an important indicator of the level of support which parents gave to their pregnant daughter's educational aspirations and needs. Where parents were prepared to discuss the problem with the pregnant daughter, there seemed to be more support for the girl to continue with school. From what pregnant learners said, it appears that most parents became negative towards their pregnant daughter, to the extent that this could lead to the learner losing their normal childhood rights and privileges.

However, female parents were reported to give more support to pregnant daughters than their male counterparts. In some cases, parental conflict was reported, which negatively affected the pregnant learners' schooling. There were some few female parents who established partnerships with the school where their pregnant daughters attended. Such

parents were reported to accompany their pregnant daughters to school and to protect them from public abuses.

Finally, this study revealed that the participants' negative perceptions to the education policy that allowed for the mainstreaming of pregnant teenagers, and the patterns of interaction with and treatment of pregnant learners in the school and the family seemed to be driven by the whole community's negative labelling of teenage pregnancy and single motherhood. Because the school and family are microcosms of the community, the study found that socio-cultural values were reflected in the way participants responded to mainstreaming of pregnant learners in the school. Besides the negative perceptions to teenage pregnancy and single motherhood, cultural limitations on pregnancy and breast-feeding also retard pregnant teenagers' access to formal schooling at both study sites. In Zimbabwe for example, it was revealed that when a woman is carrying her first pregnancy she was expected to be confined in the home.

7.3 Responding to research questions

Research question 1

How do education stakeholders in South Africa and Zimbabwe conceptualise and perceive policy guidelines on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in formal education?

The study revealed that, at both the South African and Zimbabwean schools, most study participants demonstrated inadequate knowledge on the policy that allows pregnant learners to be enrolled in formal schools. All participants indicated that there was no formal dialogue between the school management and other education stakeholders on school policy. The affected pregnant learners and their parents also confirmed that they had not held discussions with the school management when the girls had fallen pregnant.

However, some of the educators at the Zimbabwean school demonstrated meaningful understanding of the national policy provisions of the MoESC policy circular of 1999, which guide schools on how to handle girls who fall pregnant while at school.

There were negative sentiments and attitudes towards the inclusion of pregnant learners in formal schools. Most participants indicated that the policy contravened their cultural values on pregnancy and ideal motherhood. At both schools, participants claimed that the inclusion of pregnant learners in formal schools could cause teenage ill-discipline, increased teenage pregnancy and a decline in the the standard of education.

While most participants acknowledged that pregnant teenagers had the right to education, they called on authorities to establish separate schools for pregnant teenagers. It was further suggested that pregnant and former pregnant learners should pursue their educational aspirations through the non-formal education system, which accommodates adult people.

Research question 2

How are policy guidelines on the management of pregnancy in schools translated into practice in South African and Zimbabwean schools?

Observations on the ground, and school records indicated that the South African school had enrolled more pregnant learners in 2008 and 2009, than the Zimbabwean school (Appendix 13.1²⁷). There appears to be more stigmatisation of pregnant teenagers in the Zimbabwean community, to the extent that pregnant learners either preferred to suspend their schooling, or transfer to another school after delivery. Mainstreaming was found not being meaningfully implemented at the Zimbabwean school, compared to its South African counterpart. However, while there were more pregnant learners at the South African school, most stakeholders did not adequately play their roles as outlined by the policy guidelines on management of school girl pregnancy.

Education stakeholders in both countries were found to be inadequately prepared to handle issues related to school girl pregnancy. There were no follow-ups on pregnant learners and no records were maintained to monitor the attendance, participation and academic performance of pregnant learners at both schools.

²⁷ Appendix 13.1: Records on population and school participation of pregnant learners

Overall, the study revealed that there is no systematic policy dialogue and implementation at both the South African and Zimbabwean schools. The study concurred with Argyris and Schon's theoretical proposition, that there is usually a split between organisational policy and how its management and stakeholders acted (Al-Kazemi & Zajac, 1999; Argyris & Crossan, 1993; Argyris, Pitman & Smith, 1985; Anderson, 1997).

Research question 3

How are pregnant learners perceived and treated in the school, in the family and in the community?

Data from both study sites indicated that there were socio-cultural factors that influenced participants' attitudes and treatment of pregnant learners. Teenage pregnancy was found to be negatively perceived in both the South African and Zimbabwean communities, and this appeared to also influence the negative manner in which pregnant learners were treated in the home, the school and the broader community. Pregnant learners are viewed as a bad influence to other learners and therefore are 'excluded' from taking important responsibilities in the home, the school and the community.

Because of negative labels associated with teenage pregnancy and single motherhood in the community, it would appear that pregnant learners lose their status in the family, the school and the community. Pregnant learners are not given important responsibilities in the school, the family and the community at large. Hate language against, and isolation of pregnant learners were reported in the school, the family and the community. Negative attitudes towards teenage pregnancy seem to have negative consequences on pregnant learners' educational access and participation.

Research question 4

What factors motivate and demotivate pregnant learners to remain in school during and after pregnancy?

At both schools, some pregnant learners who chose to remain in school were found to be motivated. This was seen through their act of setting new goals for themselves after falling pregnant. The new goals included the desire to prove that they could improve their

lives, complete school, go to university, be financially independent and not disappoint their parents again. New goal-setting is a process in which some pregnant teenagers reflected on their past mistakes and redefined their future goals and behaviour. The study found that although the school, the home and the community environments are negative to teenage pregnancy, pregnant learners who set new goals for themselves were determined to continue with their education.

In some cases, support from significant people such as friends, other pregnant learners and parents can motivate pregnant learners to remain in school. Pregnant learners and their friends were found to team up and fight back against abusive behaviour from some of the mainstream learners at the school. There were also few reports of mothers of pregnant learners who established partnerships with schools by visiting the school and accompanying their pregnant daughters to school. Such parental support was found to protect pregnant learners from abusive behaviour from the public. It also helped to restore the pregnant learners' confidence and self-image.

My study found that hostile attitudes in the community, the school and the family demotivated pregnant teenagers to remain in school. The communities at both study sites viewed pregnant teenagers as a bad influence and therefore, felt that they should be enrolled in non-formal or special schools. This was viewed as a punitive measure to deter other learners from sexual misbehaviour.

Most participants felt that it is unfair to expect educators to teach pregnant learners because they did not receive adequate training on this. Furthermore, hate speech, negative labelling of pregnant learners as failures and isolation were reported at both schools. These are forms of stigma that can push pregnant girls out of school.

In the family, pregnant learners lose their childhood rights and close relationship with parents. Family support for schooling can be uncertain because a pregnant girl is expected to get married rather than continue with schooling. In Zimbabwe, where people are more conservative, most parents chase their pregnant daughters away to the men

suspected to be responsible for the pregnancy. In other cases, parents at the Zimbabwean study site concealed the pregnancy of their daughters by sending them to live away from home. This can result in the pregnant girl dropping out of school.

Due to more conservatism in the Zimbabwean community, the school management lacked the political will to enrol pregnant learners because they claimed that it destroys the reputation of the school in the community. This could explain why the Zimbabwean school enrolled fewer pregnant learners than the South African school. It appears that the South African community is more open and accommodative to pregnant teenager than the Zimbabwean community.

7.4 Limitations of the study

Although case studies are credited for their depth in exploration of a given phenomenon within a defined setting, there is a wide ranging debate that raises questions about the generalisation of their findings to the universe of the targeted population because of their small sample size (Ambert et al., 1995; Berg, 2001; Merriam & Associates, 2002; Schewardt, 2007). Likewise, in this study, although a wide range of participants were interviewed to achieve an in-depth exploration of the topic, only one school from each country was selected because it suited the specified objectives of the study. Because the two schools could not represent all the schools in South Africa and Zimbabwe, the findings of this study cannot be generalised beyond schools whose demographic characteristics match the schools where the study was conducted.

In this study, concentration was on participants who had daily interaction with pregnant learners. Only senior educators or those whose responsibilities related to pregnant learners and mainstream learners, who studied with pregnant learners were purposely selected to participate in the study. This excluded the views of other educators and professionals such as psychologists, social workers, doctors and nurses, whose areas of expertise are also linked to the condition of teenage pregnancy.

One method of data collection which had been planned for this study was documentary study of school records on educational participation and performance of pregnant and former pregnant learners. However, adequate data could not be obtained on academic profiles to analyse school performance before, during and after pregnancy, over a fairly long period of time. Educators did not maintain specific and systematic progress records that could be used to track performance of pregnant and former pregnant learners. Apart from what the participants said, the study did not therefore establish a quantifiable conclusion on the relationship between teenage pregnancy and academic performance, which was based on progress records.

7.5 Contributions of the study

Although the findings of this case study may not be generalised in a generic manner, the study made a contribution in confirming, strengthening and refining some existing theoretical propositions, and also generated knowledge that departed from current empirical studies.

7.5.1 Significance of the study to policy and practice

This study revealed that there is inadequate dialogue on, and understanding of policy among stakeholders within the school. Because most study participants demonstrated insufficient knowledge on policy, there is need for policy advocacy and dissemination in schools. Such a process could help to identify and critique cultural beliefs and customs that could be harmful to every child's right to education.

My study revealed that the two schools were generally inadequately equipped to deal with the psycho-social challenges that pregnant learners usually encounter (McGaha-Garnett, 2007; Miller et al., 2008; Richter & Mlambo, 2005). It is therefore recommended that, teenage pregnancy and counselling should be studied as contemporary educational problems in teacher training and development courses.

Structures for counselling should be established in schools to assist education stakeholders to cope with the different challenges such as HIV/Aids, orphanhood, child-headed households and teenage pregnancy.

7.5.2 Generation of new knowledge

Most studies conducted in Africa on school girl pregnancy have made use of either demographic data on teenage fertility, female school dropout rates and policy analysis, to make inferences on effects of teenage pregnancy and teenage motherhood on education (Grant & Hallman, 2006; Gordon, 2002; Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996; Ritchers & Hof, 1999; MoESC, 2004; Manzini, 2001). The current study is unique in that its findings are based on primary data from pregnant and former pregnant learners, their parents, educators and mainstream peers, who experienced the inclusion of pregnant learners in formal schooling. A number of African countries such as Malawi, Namibia, Cameroon, Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe have policies that allow pregnant learners to continue with their education (Meekers & Ahmed, 1999; UNICEF, 2004; Hubbard et al., 2008; Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Gordon, 2002; Chilisa, 2002; Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996). However, no study has been conducted to evaluate the utility of these policies on the ground. My study has therefore broken new ground by exploring how the intended policy beneficiaries and policy implementers in African communities perceive and experience the phenomenon of mainstreaming pregnant teenagers in formal schools.

A review of studies conducted in Africa on teenage pregnancy indicates that most researchers have focused on teenage pregnancy as a cause of school dropout and delayed school completion rates among girls (Gordon, 1995; Mitchell et al., 1999; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Lloyd & Mensch, 2006; Hof & Richters, 1999; Mokgalabone, 1999; Kaufman, de Wet & Stadler, 2001). The studies have therefore contributed more to the analysis of gender disparities in educational access, completion and outcomes. My study has taken a new dimension by contributing to the understanding of how pregnant learners experience formal schooling. The study also helps to reveal how the different actors in

social institutions such as the family and the community can influence how formal schools respond to the mainstreaming of pregnant teenagers.

Currently, the principle of education as a basic human right is assumed to be universally non-negotiable (United Nations High Commission for Human Rights, 2003; Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2001; Bray, 1996; Prinsloo, 2005; Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996; The Constitution of Zimbabwe, 1980). However, this study has revealed that while education is a basic right for every child, the manner in which the right is defined accessed by and extended to some children is contextual due to diverse socio-cultural value systems. This study found that the inclusion of pregnant learners in formal schools could contravene Article 30 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which calls for the protection and safeguarding of the cultural values of indigenous children (United Nations High Commission for Human Rights, 2003). The study revealed that while pregnant teenagers have the right to education, most participants felt that pregnant learners should not be enrolled in formal schools because it disturbs the learning atmosphere due to cultural beliefs on pregnancy and motherhood.

Studies in Africa by Gordon (1995), Dorsey (1998b) and Mensch et al (2001) concur with the feminist theoretical discourse (MacDonald, 1981; Gordon, 1996; Bryson, 1992; Stromquist, 1998) that the school is a patriarchal institution that reproduces female subordination through male domination and harassment. Findings of this study caution the generalisation of this proposition because female educators at both study sites were alleged to verbally abuse pregnant learners more than their male counterparts. It would appear from my study that where the ideal motherhood or womanhood qualities are threatened, some women might compromise the principle of gender equality.

From studies conducted in Zimbabwe and South Africa, Hof and Richters (1999) and Grant and Hallman (2006) concurred that most teenage mothers dropped out of school because of poor academic performance before they became pregnant. They concluded that pre-pregnancy school participation was a key determinant factor for teenage mothers' decisions to drop out of school. The current study refined this research proposition after

realising that most pregnant learners in this study were motivated to continue with schooling despite negative attitudes from other people. Falling pregnant was found to be a turning point for some of the girls. The girls were found to have ‘awakened and matured’ after falling pregnant, and set for themselves new goals. New goal-setting can be a motivating factor for pregnant teenagers to remain in school, despite the stigma associated with teenage pregnancy.

7.6 Revisiting research assumptions

This study was informed by four assumptions that emerged from reviewed literature. In this section, I therefore make a brief introspection of the four research assumptions using findings from my study.

Research assumption 1

Most pregnant teenagers drop out of school because of an unfriendly school environment (Mensch et al., 2001; Weigand, 2005)

There were reports of hate speech against pregnant and former pregnant learners at both schools. Most pregnant learners reported that they were isolated from mainstream learners. Most participants preferred to have separate schools for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers, rather than to mainstream them in formal schools. Therefore, the findings of this study seem to concur with the first research assumption.

Research assumption 2

Negative attitudes to teenage pregnancy in society can result in poor educational access and participation by pregnant learners (Chilisa, 2002; Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996).

Pregnant learners at both study sites reported that boys and female educators used abusive language against them. The study revealed that pregnant learners received limited support within the school, the home and in the broader community. In the broader community, there were negative attitudes towards pregnant learners, who were labeled as failures. Available school records indicated a decline in the quality and subsequent achievement in

the school work of pregnant learners. This research assumption was therefore confirmed by the findings of this study.

Research assumption 3

Educators are not adequately equipped to implement new education policies at the school level (Jansen, 2001; Hess, 1999)

Educators, school governing board members and parents at both schools demonstrated inadequate knowledge on their responsibilities towards the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in school. There was no formal dialogue on policy at both study sites. Educators expressed concern that they had not received any professional training or counseling on how to handle and manage issues related to teenage pregnancy. On the basis of these observations, this research assumption was confirmed by my study.

Research assumption 4

Pregnant teenagers lack motivation to learn (Grant & Hallman, 2006; Hof & Richters, 1999)

Although academic records indicated that school performance declined during the period of pregnancy, pregnant learners who remained in school said they were keen to change their future through education. They set new goals for themselves. These included proving that they could do something in life, furthering their education up to university, being able to look after their babies and not disappointing their parents again. The findings of this study went against this assumption from the reviewed literature. From this observation, I therefore posit that, despite challenges that pregnant learners can face in the home, the school and the community, they can still be motivated to complete their education.

7.7 Recommendations for further research

This research was a case study of only two schools, and therefore its findings may not be generalised to other schools in South Africa and Zimbabwe. It is therefore recommended that a comprehensive survey that could include different types of schools and communities affected by teenage pregnancy be conducted because communities do not

conceive and respond to a given phenomenon in the same way. Furthermore, surveys usually employ data gathering instruments and methods that accommodate larger samples than case studies.

Although the study had also been designed to gather quantifiable data on the educational outcomes of pregnant learners, no meaningful records were available on academic results of pregnant learners over a period of time. Another study should be conducted to generate quantitative data on how the policy on mainstreaming pregnant teenagers in formal schools might benefit the right bearers in both countries. Such a study should investigate the school, circuit, district, provincial and national records on academic performance of learners, who wrote final school examinations while they were pregnant or just after giving birth.

My study focused on how the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in formal education was responded to by education stakeholders at two schools selected from South Africa and Zimbabwe. The former pregnant learners who participated in focus group interviews seemed to differ from pregnant learners in the way they experienced schooling. Therefore, another study that could track and compare the educational outcomes of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers could give an even broader perspective on this subject.

7.8 Chapter summary and conclusion

This study found more similarities than differences in the manner in which the two schools responded to the mainstreaming of pregnant learners. At both schools, socio-cultural factors seemed to be more influential than official school policy in defining the place of pregnant learners in formal schools. Cultural beliefs and norms against teenage pregnancy and single motherhood were found to be the foundation upon which negative perceptions and treatment of pregnant teenagers in the community, home and the school were based.

Negative factors to the mainstreaming of pregnant learners at both schools included a lack of political will to assist pregnant learners by educators, hate language within and outside the school and negative labelling of pregnant learners as children who were undisciplined, immoral and had lost their future. Such perceptions and treatment seemed to make pregnant learners feel unwelcome at school, to the extent that most of these at the Zimbabwean study site chose to suspend school attendance or even voluntarily withdraw from school altogether because of the expectation that a pregnant girl should be married rather than remain in school.

According to policy, there should be equal treatment of the pregnant girl and boy who is responsible for the pregnancy (DoE, 2007; MoESC Policy Circular Minute P35, 1999). From complains made by most female parents, it seems not much was being done at both schools to boys who were suspected to be responsible for impregnating a girl.

With regard to policy implementation, the study tended to agree with the theoretical framework that underpinned the study, namely Argyris and Schon's action science theoretical proposition that there is usually a split between most organisations' official policies or codes of ethics and what management and workers do on the ground (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1990; Al-Kazemi & Zajac, 1999; Malen et al., 2002; Argyris & Crossan, 1993; Schon, 1982). This was illustrated by the observation that while both schools were supposed to be guided by national policy guidelines (DoE, 2007; MoESC Policy Circular Minute P35, 1999) to identify and manage the educational challenges that could be faced by pregnant learners, the policies were not adequately implemented by both school administration and educators. From what the participants said, it would appear that the inadequate implementation of policy guidelines on the management of pregnancy at the two schools was linked to the negative perceptions that most of the study participants held against the inclusion of pregnant learners in formal schools. Instead, there was a call from most participants that pregnant learners should be isolated in their own special schools because mainstreaming them in ordinary schools lowered the reputation and educational standards of schools.

Another reason for ineffective policy implementation seems to be the inadequate knowledge on the provisions of the policy guidelines on the management of pregnancy in schools by most of the policy duty bearers like educators, community representatives in school governing bodies and parents. Some educators at the Zimbabwean study site, however, reflected meaningful understanding of the policy, while their counterparts at the South African school seemed to lack basic knowledge of the roles they were expected to play according to the policy guidelines. In concurrence with Argyris and Schon's action science theory, it appeared that the governing values that tended to inform most of the participants' attitudes and treatment of, and institutional responsiveness to pregnant learners were socially acquired within the socio-cultural setting of the broader community than guided by organisational policy.

However, while there were these barriers to the mainstreaming of pregnant learners at formal schools where the study was conducted, there seems to be the possibility for opportunities to redress the negative attitudes towards pregnant learners among the education stakeholders. One such opportunity was that, despite the negative factors, some pregnant teenagers seemed to have set for themselves new goals, which gave them the resilience to continue with schooling. Furthermore, participants at both study sites acknowledged that pregnant teenagers have the right to education, just like any other children. This recognition could be an avenue through which the policy on mainstreaming pregnant learners in formal schools could be advocated and justified to all stakeholders like school management, educators, parents and mainstream learners. Besides, the fact that the study participants were aware that policy prohibits the expulsion of pregnant learners from school, can be used as a stepping stone to assist schools in developing school-based guidelines to identify and cater for the educational needs of pregnant learners.

In view of the prevalence of teenage pregnancy the world over and the fact that education is a basic human right, I conclude this study by recommending that formal schools should redefine and broaden their roles so as to identify and accommodate the needs of children who might fall pregnant while at school.